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XXVI.—THE EARLY “ROYAL-ENTRY”

Many, if not most, of the writers on early pageantry state that the first pageantic “royal-entry” at London took place in 1236, when Queen Eleanor of Provence arrived at her new capital. It is the purpose of this paper to show that there had been elaborate “royal-entries” before that date, and that the first pageantic “royal-entry” did not occur until sixty-two years after this ceremony. The best way to do this, is to make a survey of the “royal-entries” of the thirteenth century.

It was in connection with this method of honoring their rulers that the English people developed pageantry most notably between the early years of the thirteenth century and the reign of Queen Elizabeth; therefore the beginnings of pageantry in connection with the “royal-entry” are not only interesting in themselves, but historically important. The splendor which surrounded all ceremonies involving the king was great, long before 1200; Wendover’s account of the coronation of Richard I in 1189¹ is a clear picture of the kind of thing that took place. But there was no pageantry, in the true sense of a procession with floats and characters representing figures of historical, allegorical, or symbolical significance. The mayor and citizens, it is true, often took part in these celebrations, riding to meet the king outside of the city and escorting him joyfully to the palace; golden gifts were offered, and the walls of the houses were decked with costly tapestries.

¹ *Flores Historiarum*, I, pp. 164 f.; copied by Matthew Paris (*Historia Minor*, II, pp. 6 f.; *Chronica Majora*, II, p. 348). Cf. Strutt, *Manners and Customs*, II, p. 59.

But pageantry in its strict sense was still confined to the Church and folk.

In 1207 the Emperor Otho visited London; the city was elaborately decorated, but there is nothing in the account which we have that leads us even to suspect pageantry.² In 1209, Henry Fitz-Alwin, of the Drapers' Company, became the first Lord Mayor of London; and the procession to Westminster, which in the seventeenth century developed into elaborate pageantry, and which to this day is a feature of London civic life, began. These shows did not become pageantic until the sixteenth century: the modern show is descended from this procession on one side, and the Midsummer Watch on the other.

What is often called "the first example of pageantry in the proper sense"—as Chambers phrases it—is found in the year 1236, when Eleanor of Provence rode through London on her way to her coronation. The authority for assuming pageants on this occasion is a passage from Stow's *Survey*; but a reference to Stow's authority, Matthew Paris, gives us a statement that is ambiguous at best. Paris tells us how the streets were cleaned, the city ornamented with flags, banners, chaplets, hangings, candles and lamps,—and "quibusdam prodigiosis ingenii et por-

² *Annales Lond.*, I, p. 13: ". . . in cuius adventu tota civitas Londoniæ induit solempnitatem pallis et aliis ornamentis circumornata." Cf. also E. K. Chambers, *The Mediæval Stage*, Oxford, 1903, II, p. 166, n. 5.

In Chrétien de Troyes' romance *Yvain* (lines 2319, 2340 f.), is an interesting mediæval account of citizens welcoming a king. To be sure, the king is Arthur, and the citizens live in a land which cannot be located on a map of this world; but we may presume that Chrétien took his description of the streets hung with tapestries, the dancing folk, and other "features," from the life of the time. There is nothing pageantic in this welcome; but we must not forget that the description is probably taken from the life of the mid-twelfth century.

tentis.”³ Much as I should like to do so, I cannot agree with those writers who see here a union of pageantry and “royal-entry.” The matter cannot, of course, be definitely proved, one way or the other; but had there been real pageantry in 1236, it is not likely that we should find no other established instance of it before 1298; for there were plenty of other opportunities for its use.

Although there is no mention of pageants in Matthew Paris’s account of the arrival of the Count of Flanders in 1239, the extract from his history noted below, is interesting as showing the usual method of preparing for the entry

³ *Chron. Maj.*, III, p. 336. Giles, in his translation (I, p. 8), renders this “with wonderful devices and extraordinary representations,” which again is ambiguous. There may have been pageantry on this occasion; *representations* may refer to miracle plays; but this interpretation is not necessary. That it is unlikely, seems to be shown by the fact that no other example of a pageantic “royal-entry” occurs before 1298.

The oft-quoted passage from Stow is this: “of triumphant Shewes made by the citizens of London, yee may read in the yeere 1236. the 20. of Henrie the third, Andrew Bockell then beeing Maior, how Elianor . . . riding through the Citie of [London] towards Westminster, there to bee crowned Queene of England, the Citie was adorned with silkes, and in the night with Lamps, Cressets . . . besides many Pageants and strange deuices there presented. . . .” Stow, *Survey* (1618), p. 147; cf. Hone, *Ancient Mysteries Described*, p. 234; Taylor, *Glory of Regality*, p. 251; Chambers, *op. cit.*, II, p. 167; etc.

Miss Strickland, in her *Lives of the Queens of England*, I, p. 247 (referring to Matthew Paris) notes that the citizens “prepared all sorts of costly pageantry to grace the coronation festival.” It should be pointed out that her use of the word *pageantry* is extremely loose; (cf. *ibid.*, I, pp. 41, 42, 43, 121, etc.). The same caution may be extended to Mr. Richard Davey (cf. *The Pageant of London* (2 vols.), London, 1906, I, p. 95) and many other writers, who use the word rather in a sense of “gorgeous procession” than in its stricter meaning. We must be on our guard against this too-general use of the word.

of a noble guest.⁴ The citizens wore their festal gowns, and there was evidently a procession.

In 1243, Beatrice, Countess of Provence, came to London. The city was cleaned and decorated by order of the king; but again Matthew Paris fails to mention pageantry.⁵ The same author records the return of Henry III from France, the same year; again, there is no pageantry in the technical sense.⁶

A great procession took place in 1247, when Henry received from the Patriarch of Jerusalem some drops of the Precious Blood. Matthew Paris was present on this occasion, and wrote an account of the whole proceedings.⁷ The

⁴ *Chron. Maj.*, III, p. 617: "De cuius adventu cum rex certificaretur secus quam deceret lætabundus occurrit venienti, præcipitque cives Londonienses in adventu ejus omnes truncos et sterquillina lutum quoque et omnia offendicula a plateis festinanter amovere; civesque festivis vestibus ornatos, in equis eidem comiti gratanter occurrere faleratis. In quo facto, rex multorum sibilum movit et cachinnum."

⁵ *Op. cit.*, IV, p. 261 f.; "Venit autem in apparatu magno et fastigio pomposa nimis; . . . jussit rex civitatem Londoniarum cortinis aulæis et diversis aliis ornamentis decorari a ponte usque Westmonasterium, stipitibus, luto et omni eluvie et offendiculo procul a visu transeuntium elongato." Giles translates this passage: "She came in great state, and with very pompous pageantry," etc. This is the free use of the word; there is no reason to suppose that the citizens furnished pageants.

This entry of the Countess is noted in *Archæologia*, I, p. 492, note d. The property inventoried in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul (*ibid.*, p. 492) included "rubeus strictus cum longis avibus et leonibus, de dono Comitissæ Provincie."

⁶ Paris, *Chron. Maj.*, IV, p. 255. *Pompa inanis gloriæ* stands in the margin.

⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, p. 644. (The account begins on p. 640). Cf. also *Ann. Lond.*, I, p. 44 (*sub anno* 1246): "dominus rex cum honorabili processione dictum sanguinem recepit." *Flores Hist.*, II, pp. 343 f., contains an account of this ceremony, which Davey (*Pageant of London*, I, p. 115), calls "one of the most picturesque pageants" of the reign of Henry III—using the word carelessly.

clergy, naturally, took a prominent part in this ceremony; the king, in humble raiment, carried the vase containing the Blood of Christ from St. Paul's to the church at Westminster. It is interesting to note that the civic authorities apparently had no place in this procession, which was a Church affair distinctly.⁸

In 1252, Alexander III of Scotland married the daughter of Henry III at York. Great feasting is recorded. Later, pageantry plays a part in celebrating royal nuptials, but not yet.⁹ In 1255, on the eve of St. Andrew's Day, Henry returned from Gascony. Again London was adorned, and the king was conducted to the palace of Westminster with enthusiastic pomp. Though there is splendor, there is not — as yet — pageantry in its true sense.¹⁰ London was again decorated by the king's order on the occasion of the visit of the King and Queen of Scotland in 1256; but Paris does not mention pageants.¹¹

⁸ Says Matthew Paris (*op. cit.*, iv, pp. 641 f.): "Quo et ipse rex venit, et cum summo honore et reverentia ac timore accipiens illud vasculum cum thesauro memorato, tulit illud ferens in propatulo supra faciem suam, iens pedes, habens humilem habitum, scilicet pauperem capam sine caputio, præcedentibus vestitis prædictis, sine pausatione, usque ad ecclesiam Westmonasterii, quæ distat ab ecclesia sancti Pauli circiter uno miliari. . . . Nec adhuc cessabat dominus rex, quin indefessus ferens illud vas, ut prius, circuire[t] ecclesiam, regiam, et thalamos suos." *This was no pompa inanis gloriæ!*

⁹ Matthew Paris, *op. cit.*, v, pp. 266 f. The splendor and extravagance of the marriage banquets are remarked on, pp. 269 f.

¹⁰ Matthew Paris, *op. cit.*, v, p. 527: "Quo die a magnatibus Angliæ quamplurimus et civibus Londoniensibus, civitate Londoniarum nobiliter adornata, est receptus, et usque ad regiam Westmonasterialem cum magno pompa et applausu est perductus."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, v, pp. 573, 574. It is interesting to note that the Fifth Episode of the Chester Pageant of 1910 showed the visit of Prince Edward and Princess Eleanor to that city in 1256 (*Book of the Chester Pageant*, p. 49). No pageants—in the older sense—were reproduced.

Nor does there seem to have been any pageantry when Edward I was crowned in 1274;¹² although on his return from France, "a clero et populo est receptus cum gaudio maximo et honore."¹³

In 1298 we find, for the first time in a "royal-entry," pageantry in the strict sense of the word, when the Fishmongers celebrated the Battle of Falkirk, won by Edward I. Perhaps this is not strictly a "royal-entry,"—I can find no mention of the king being present,—but it is closely related to royalty; at any rate, it is not a religious pageant, nor a folk-festival. "The Cytezyns of London hearyng tell of this great Victorye made great solempnyty euery one accordyng to his crafte & in especyall the fyshmongers which wth solempne processyon passed through the cytye havyng fyrst 4 storions¹⁴ gylded caryed on 4 horses and after 4 horses caryed 4 samons¹⁵ of sylver and after xlvii knyghtis all armed vppon luges of the water¹⁶ and St. Magnus among the rest wth a thowsand horsemen passed to leaden hall And this they dyd on St. Magnus Day in honor of the Kyngis Victorye."¹⁷

¹² See *Ann. Lond.*, I, p. 84; *Flores Hist.*, III, p. 44; Rishanger, *Chronica et Annales*, p. 84. Matthew of Westminster is quoted by J. G. Nichols, *London Pageants*, p. 10, as his authority for saying that on the king's return from abroad (2 August 1274) "the streets were hung with rich cloths . . . the Aldermen and Burgesses of the city threw out of their windows handfulls of gold and silver to signify their great gladness at his safe return, and the conduits ran plentifully with wine. . . ." I cannot find the basis for these remarks in Matthew of Westminster. Cf. Fairholt, *Lord Mayor's Pageants*, pt. I, p. 2.

¹³ Rishanger, p. 83. If this shows pageantry, make the most of it!

¹⁴ Sturgeons.

¹⁵ Salmones.

¹⁶ A trade-mark common enough in later Lord Mayor's Shows.

¹⁷ *The Chronicle of Dunmow*, (in Harl. ms. 530, fols. 2-13; this paragraph is on fol. 7b), cited by Stow, *Annals*, p. 207. Chambers, *op. cit.*, II, p. 167, says that he could not identify Stow's authority

This show is particularly important as giving us the first "triumph" in which animals—or, to be more exact, fishes—are used with a trade signification. The reason for the presence of St. Magnus is obvious; we cannot tell whether he was impersonated by a living rider, or was an image, borne by riders; if the former, he probably shows a development from the latter.

The thirteenth-century "royal-entry" contained much splendor, but—until the last years—no pageantry in the strict sense of the word. Whether or not Edward were present at this civic celebration of 1298, the fishes, armed knights,¹⁸ and St. Magnus appeared in his honor; the occasion was not a folk-holiday, and may be considered the equivalent of a royal-entry.

By the fourteenth century this ceremony was in a fair

(abbreviated *Chro. Dun.*). By referring to the first place where Stow uses it—namely on p. 170 of his *Annals*—I discovered the name of the chronicle written out in full. Thomson, *Chron. Lond. Bridge*, p. 101, describes the MS.; it "is now to be found only in a small quarto volume in the Harleian Library of Manuscripts, no. 530, article II, page 2a. It consists of a miscellaneous collection of notes, in the handwritings of Stow, Camden, and perhaps Sir Henry Savile; transcribed upon old, stained and worn-out paper."

Cf., also, on this 1298 show, Herbert, *History of the Livery Companies*, I, pp. 89 f.; Chambers, II, p. 167; Davidson, *English Mystery Plays*, p. 86 (who says that in 1293—obviously a misprint—the London guilds held a procession with what appear to have been moving pageants indicative of trade, to welcome Edward I on his return from Scotland); J. G. Nichols, *Lond. Pag.*, p. 6. All these writers go back to Stow.

Fairholt, *op. cit.*, pt. I, pt. 3, calls this "the earliest exhibition of shows or pageants connected with the city trades or companies." I have found no earlier purely civic pageantry.

¹⁸ These may have been real; but as they rode "luces of the water" they were probably, at the most, members of the guild, (who may also have been members of the watch,) and strongly suggest pageant-knights, whose patent of knighthood was ephemeral.

way to become pageantic ; and, in fact, it developed quickly from this germ, until little more than a hundred years later, John Lydgate was writing words to go with the spectacular shows with which royal visitors to London were regaled.

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